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Lincoln in Indiana

(Concluded)

By J. EDWARD MURR

LINCOLN'S AMBITION TO BECOME A RIVER PILOT

I know there is a God and that he hates injustice and slavery. I see the storm coming, and I know that His hand is in it. If He has a place and work for me—and I think He has—I believe I am ready.

It was Goldwin Smith who said: "The Mississippi river was once a mental horizon and afterward a boundary line." During Lincoln's youth this river had become the highway for the western pioneer, and what was true of the Father of Waters was true of the Ohio river.

Lincoln came in touch with the outside world on this great highway. Travel by boats, slow as it was, served as quite the best means of making long journeys. Occasionally a passing steamer landed at Anderson creek, and since Troy was regarded as a place of some importance most of the river crafts made port there. Hence young Lincoln, while acting as ferryman during his seventeenth year, was privileged to see somewhat of life from without. Notable men occasionally passed, and he may have even met with some of them.

A short distance above Troy, General LaFayette, while making his tour of the Western States by way of the Ohio river, spent a night in a stone house on the river bank after his disabled steamer sank. Perhaps Lincoln did not see the "Friend of Washington," but his passing and the circumstance of his spending the night ashore not far from where Lincoln lived, furnished a theme for the pioneers for a considerable time thereafter.

It was while acting as ferryman at Anderson creek that Lincoln made his first dollar. This circumstance, which he related in later life to members of his cabinet and Secretary Seward in particular, was as follows:

I was standing at the steamboat landing contemplating my new boat, and wondering how I might improve it, when a steamer approached coming down the river. At the same time two passengers came to the river bank and wished to be taken out to the packet with their luggage. They looked among the boats, singled out mine, and asked me to scull them to the boat. Sometime prior to this I had constructed a small boat in which I planned to carry some produce South which had been gathered chiefly by my own exertions. We were poor, and in them days people down South who did not own slaves were reckoned as scrubs. When I was requested to scull these men out to the steamer, I gladly did so, and after seeing them and their trunks on board, and the steamer making ready to pass on, I called out to the men: "You have forgotten to pay me." They at once each threw a half dollar in the bottom of the boat in which I was standing. You gentlemen may think it was a very small matter, and in the light of things now transpiring it was, but I assure you it was one of the most important incidents in my life. I could scarcely believe my eyes. It was difficult for me to realize that I, a poor boy, had earned a dollar in less than a day. The world seemed wider and fairer before me. I was a more hopeful and confident being from that time.

Young Lincoln being ambitious and desirous of bettering his condition very naturally looked to the river for employment. Possessing some skill with carpenter's tools he had at this time constructed a boat that he deemed seaworthy enough to make the journey referred to in his conversation with Secretary Seward.

It has been asserted by some of his biographers that this journey was not made, and one writer ventures to suggest that since the Lincolns had nothing in the way of produce justifying such a trip, it was therefore merely a journey of the imagination. Such a position taken is a needless effort to establish the well-known poverty of the Lincolns, but since no such journey was undertaken by any at that time without presuming upon neighborly assistance, which proved in substantially every case to be a mutual accommodation, the proposed trip down the Ohio and Mississippi by young Lincoln might have been fully justified, since it is now known that he had on his own account a crop of tobacco. The plans for the trip, as indicated in the conversation with Seward, were so changed as to cause him to leave his own boat behind and take passage upon the flatboat of Mr. Ray.

Having made this and the later trip with young Gentry

down the great river, he seems to have been disposed "to follow the Ohio," and a little later went to his old friend and patron "Uncle Wood," in whom he reposed great confidence, requesting that this gentleman aid him by way of a recommendation to secure a position on some steamer plying up and down this river. Mr. Wood, realizing that Lincoln was not of age, hesitated to advise the youth to leave his father, and refused to give the assistance deemed by Lincoln essential to secure a position. It was quite the rule in that day for a boy to remain with his parents until reaching his majority. However, Lincoln was very insistent, and in the course of his argument remarked that "it was his best chance," and "a chance is all I want." After some persuasion on the part of Wood, he yielded and remained with his father until well into his twenty-second year.

Since the river traffic along the Ohio and Mississippi at that time, and for a considerable period thereafter, was great, had young Lincoln succeeded in prevailing upon his old friend Wood to aid him in securing a position as pilot we might have lost our great war President, but would have perhaps gained another Mark Twain. In any case, had he been so fortunate as to find some "Boswell," his fame as a humorist would have been secure.

That young Lincoln seems to have become resigned to his lot is evidenced by Mr. Wood in stating that soon after this interview relative to his becoming a river pilot he saw Lincoln whip-sawing lumber, and on asking him what he intended doing with this, Wood was told that the elder Lincoln was "planning to erect a new house in the spring." The letters of John Hanks concerning the Illinois location and the glowing accounts of Dennis Hanks on his return from that region occasioned the abandonment of the plan to erect the new home, and the lumber was disposed of to Josiah Crawford who used the major portion of it in the construction of an additional room to his house.

It was soon after young Lincoln returned to the farm from Anderson Creek ferry that he formed the habit of attending the various courts, but it was while acting as ferryman that he attended court for the first time. His presence

there was not prompted by mere curiosity or due to any ambition that he possessed to take up the law as a profession, but he appeared as a prisoner at the bar, the first and only time in his life; although, had there been debtors' prisons during a certain period of his lifetime, he might have suffered imprisonment in consequence of the overwhelming obligations that he assumed and which he failed to meet until many years after they were incurred.

The circumstance of his becoming a prisoner and his appearance in the court were as follows:

While acting as ferryman at Anderson creek on the Indiana side of the Ohio river, John and Benjamin Dill, two farmers residing on the Kentucky side of the river just opposite the town of Troy, had become licensed ferrymen. Occasionally when busily engaged in agricultural pursuits, they neglected the ferry to the extent that their ferry bell would sound again and again without their hearing it; or, what was more probable, on hearing it failed to respond to its call. On such occasions when the bell rang repeatedly, young Lincoln would push out from the Indiana side and ferry the anxious traveler across the river, and of course received the usual fee for such services.

Whether Lincoln's ear was thought to be too attentive to the ferry bell on the Kentucky side of the river, or whether the Dill brothers wished to make him an example to any and all who were disposed to take liberties with their legal rights, we do not know, but in any case they decided to entrap Lincoln and visit him with suitable punishment. Accordingly they requested a neighbor to sound the ferry bell, and when they did not respond as was frequently the case, Lincoln quickly oared across the river. Running his boat up to an opening in the dense willows on the river bank where the supposed anxious passenger stood in apparent readiness to step in, Lincoln was surprised to find himself seized by both the supposed passenger and the Dill brothers who had up to his appearance been hiding in the willows. They at once announced their intention of giving their prisoner a "ducking." The youthful ferryman not appearing to understand their motives became very angry, and the presumption is that he manifested this

in no uncertain manner. It never appeared clear whether the original purpose of the Dill brothers was carried out or seriously attempted after the preliminary skirmish with "Long Abe," but it is quite true that they at length proposed to "take him before the squire" where punishment could be meted out in a legal manner. Lincoln, by this time understanding his supposed offense, accompanied his captors to the local justice, one Samuel Pate, who resided one mile distant down the river. On their arrival at the farm home of Pate finding that gentleman out on the farm at work, one of their party was dispatched to inform his honor that more weighty matters needed his attention, while the others stood guard over the prisoner.

More or less regularity appears to have been observed in the hearing accorded the youthful offender. At first it is said he was greatly disturbed on hearing the statements of the two Dills and about the decoy, more especially so when it appeared from some of their assertions that a jail sentence awaited him, but when the 'Squire proposed to him to offer his version of the affair and make any statement that he cared to, Lincoln gladly availed himself of the opportunity. In doing so he freely and frankly confessed that on numerous occasions he had ferried passengers across the river from the Kentucky side when the travelers failed to secure a response to the repeated ringing of the bell, but he disclaimed any knowledge of the fact that in so doing he had violated any law, distinctly stating that he did not know he was thus encroaching upon the rights of the Dill brothers; that if he had known it was wrong, he would not have been guilty in any single instance. He further alleged that not only was he free from intentional wrong, but in reality he supposed he was conferring a great favor upon the owners of the ferry who, he supposed, were at such times away from home or were otherwise engaged, as well as accommodating anxious travelers.

Without throwing himself upon the mercy of the court or pleading for leniency, he nevertheless did so all the more effectively by impressing, as he did, both his accusers and the 'squire with his sincerity, truthfulness and honesty, re-asserting his ignorance of the law and promising that in the

future he would not be found trespassing upon their rights. The appeal was effective, and the court, after listening to this recital of facts, dismissed him with some suitable words of advice. Thus, like Cæsar in chains, he had talked himself free.

The 'squire became greatly interested in Lincoln, and finding him a great talker and inquisitive concerning court procedure especially, urged the young man to prolong his stay, which he did. On taking his leave the 'squire pressed upon him an invitation to attend a sitting of his court which Lincoln accepted, and not only did he attend this particular sitting, but became a regular attendant so long as he remained ferryman at Anderson creek.

'Squire Pate did not live to witness Lincoln's rise to fame, but many of his family did. The house is still standing in which this trial was held, and the only remaining son of Pate pointed out the room in which this memorable sitting of his father's court was held. The circumstance was known to a number of the old citizens of the neighborhood, and a full account of this incident appeared in a local newspaper in Lincoln's old home county—the *Perry County Tribune*.

Young Lincoln was in the habit of attending the sessions of the circuit court as well as trials before the local justice of the peace. That he possessed an ambition at this early period to become a lawyer is certainly true.

His friend, David Turnham, was elected constable of the township, and had in consequence gotten possession of a copy of the *Revised Statutes* of Indiana. Lincoln being especially anxious to read this volume and Turnham being loath to have it leave the house, Lincoln spent hours at Turnham's home devouring this book.

The volume contained a copy of the Declaration of Independence as well as the National and State Constitutions. These Lincoln studied, committing to memory the Declaration of Independence and large portions of the National Constitution, and for the first time in his life met with legal enactments touching upon slavery.

Aside from the flatboat trips down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, young Lincoln saw comparatively little of the

world without. As has been indicated, he frequented the sittings of the circuit courts at Boonville, in Warrick county, as well as at Rockport, the county seat of Spencer county, and was often at Troy. In addition to his visits to these comparatively small places, he had an occasion to go at least once a year, after approaching manhood, to Princeton, in Gibson county, there being a carding machine located at that place which converted the fleece into rolls ready for the spinning wheel. Hand carding being quite tedious and slow, young Lincoln was sent with the wool to this machine. The journey was a rather long one for that time, and occupied some three days. These little excursions, together with the usual trips to Gordon's or Hoffman's Mills, relieved the monotony and routine of life, and it is said that these trips were gladly welcomed by the future President.

The mills for grinding corn in the early days were crude affairs. The "horse-mill" was the first one introduced, small mills propelled by horses hitched to a "sweep." Later, and during the Indiana residence of the Lincolns, Hoffman's water mill was erected on Anderson creek. The horse mill at Gordon's was the scene of that incident that Mr. Lincoln was accustomed to revert to again and again, professing to think that it was one of the principal incidents of his life. The circumstance was as follows:

Lincoln and young David Turnham had gone to mill, but securing a late start and having to "take their turn," it was quite late in the afternoon when young Lincoln hitched his father's old flea-bitten gray mare to the sweep, and perching himself upon the accustomed seat began to urge the old mare to a lively pace. He was "clucking" and belaboring the horse with a switch and in the midst of his urgings he started to say: "Get up here, you old hussy," when the old gray resisted the continued drubbing and lifting her hind feet kicked him full in the face. Before the sentence was finished the young man was knocked off the sweep and lay unconscious. Young Turnham ran for help, and soon Abraham's father came with a wagon, placed the unconscious youth in it, and took him home. He lay in a stupor during the greater portion of the night but toward morning showed signs of returning con-

sciousness. Erelong he roused up and opening his eyes exclaimed:—"you old hussy," thus completing the exclamation attempted the evening before.

Mr. Herndon, the law partner of Lincoln, said that Lincoln often called attention to this experience of his youth and entered into discussions with him as to the mystery connected with the utterance of these particular words on regaining consciousness.

Occasionally young Lincoln was privileged to get a breath of the great world from without by meeting with some chance passerby or "mover" to other regions in the then far West. On one occasion a wagon of one of these emigrants broke down near the Lincoln cabin and while the damaged vehicle was undergoing repairs the wife and daughter on invitation spent the time in the Lincoln cabin. What was especially interesting to the youth was that they had a book of stories which the lady read to him. After their journey had been resumed, Lincoln, who like the great apostle to the Gentiles turned everything to his advantage, proceeded to write a story of the whole affair; but giving free play to his imagination and fancy he drew the account out at some length, describing in detail his mounting a horse and overtaking the emigrant wagon, and proposing an elopement with the young lady whose father interposed objections to their marriage. Lincoln purposed enlarging upon this story and submitting it for publication, but thought differently concerning it later, and thus the story, which was doubtless crude and altogether unworthy of a place in literature, was lost save that we have preserved the one item of value which was that he was always "scribbling and writing."

It is rather remarkable that Lincoln did not appoint any of his old associates to any Federal position, since there were at least some three or four of them quite capable. On the score of boyhood friendship it would appear that he would under ordinary circumstances have remembered them, especially when good and efficient service would have been rendered by some of them in certain departments. So far as can be ascertained no applications ever reached him for patronage from any of his old friends, although, as has been heretofore detailed, some two or three journeyed to Washington for that

purpose, but were anticipated and forestalled in such a manner as to prevent any formal request being made. This characteristic seems to have been peculiar to Lincoln, for even in the appointment of his friend, Judge David Davis, unusual pressure was made with some suggestion of reluctance even then. The departments were not filled with his old associates, and political loyalty was not especially rewarded by him. This practice was quite the reverse of that of President Grant.

William Ferrier, well known by the writer, was a boyhood associate of General Grant. He often related the following circumstance which was characteristic of General Grant, although in some respects an exceptional incident; and since it serves as a contrast to the practice of Lincoln it is here given.

Ferrier was the founder and long the publisher of the *Clark County Record*, an Indiana newspaper in its day wielding considerable power and influence. Ferrier and Grant were boys together and were great friends. At the time of Grant's appointment to West Point, young Ferrier was appointed to Annapolis, but was prevented from entering the Navy by reason of physical disability, and another was selected in his stead who later became a Rear Admiral. Ferrier drifted West and early became an editor. Like Grant, he was a Democrat, but at the outbreak of the Rebellion he boldly changed his political affiliation and became an ardent supporter of Lincoln. Later when General Grant became President, his old friend decided to go to Washington and call upon him in the White House. On entering the waiting room he found a large number of persons, and supposing that it would be some time before he could be admitted he seated himself, and while indulging in this reflection he was surprised greatly on hearing his name called. On regaining his composure somewhat he approached the private office of his boyhood friend with conflicting emotions, very naturally judging that his name must have been recognized as that of an old acquaintance and thus given precedence; at the same time wondering whether he was justified in accepting such courtesy when so many were in waiting, perhaps on urgent business. On entering the room of the President he was greeted by General Grant with the salutation: "How are you, William?" The two old

friends renewed their former acquaintance by reference to numerous incidents transpiring in their youth. Grant particularly mentioned the old swimming hole and the time when their clothing was stolen, while Ferrier reminded Grant of his driving a particularly fine span of horses down main street in Georgetown and cracking his black-snake whip. In recalling this incident Ferrier suggested:

Mr. President, although we have been separated all these years, I have watched your career with considerable interest and pride. I have been your supporter, both during the War and in the political campaign, but I give it as my judgment that as great as have been the honors that have been showered upon you, you have never had an occasion to be quite as proud of them as you were that morning in Georgetown when you drove those horses.

Grant laughed heartily and readily acknowledged that "this was probably true." After a few moments in conversation Ferrier arose preparatory to taking his leave, whereupon the President motioned him to be seated, and then unexpectedly asked him if there was not some position at his disposal in the government which Ferrier would like to have. Ferrier, whose purpose in making the call was far removed from this, replied:

No, sir, Mr. President, I have no ambition at all to serve the government in any appointive or elective office whatever. I am an editor and enjoy my work, and do not desire to leave it.

To which the President replied:

Very well, William, then I'll see to it that you are furnished certain copies of government notices which are at my disposal, and these can be printed by you; they will mean something to you, I hope.

No opposition was of course made to this, but on the contrary the unexpected offer was received with hearty thanks. On Ferrier's again suggesting that he was unduly taking up the President's time, Grant motioned him to his chair and asked: "Where is your brother Jim?" Ferrier replied that his brother was a resident of Jeffersonville, Indiana. "Then, William," announced the President, "I shall appoint Jim as postmaster of Jeffersonville." "But, Mr. President, my brother is not now, nor has he been an applicant for this position,

whereas others have, and my understanding is that Senator — has this matter at his disposal." "William, I must remember my old boyhood friends. Jim will be appointed postmaster at Jeffersonville." "Yes, but Mr. President, while I assure you I appreciate your generosity and friendship, and I feel quite sure that while my brother is not an applicant for the place, he would be more than pleased to receive the appointment. But my understanding is that Senator — has already made choice of a gentleman for this place." "William, I am President and Jim will be postmaster."

The sequel is a matter of history and furnishes very interesting reading in the light of present-day procedure. James Ferrier was appointed postmaster for Jeffersonville, and Senator — interposed objections, the Senate refusing to confirm the appointment. On the adjournment of Congress Ferrier was appointed by Grant, and when Congress reassembled the matter came up and his confirmation again failed. On the adjournment of Congress once more the President appointed Ferrier, and this time the Senate confirmed his appointment. William Ferrier, the editor, enjoyed the government patronage in the matter of public printing as long as this was at the disposal of General Grant.

Lincoln never forgot a kindness, as evidenced in his steadfast refusal to attack John Calhoun during the great debate with Douglas, since Calhoun had early befriended him.

Lincoln was enabled to appear before the people as a successful candidate on numerous occasions, and took particular pride in calling attention to the fact that he had never been defeated but once when the people themselves were appealed to, although his methods in some respects were anything but those of a politician.

He did not concern himself in local elections when he was not a candidate. Being so often before the people for political preferment, there were times when others equally ambitious to serve their party either became Lincoln's opponent or threatened to be. At such times he would seek an interview with them, and with an unconscious arrogance and priority of claim he would say:

I would rather than not that you step aside in this race and let me have a free field so that I may show them what I can do.

He was only delivered from egotism by the recognized superiority of his powers, and would have been justly charged with monumental selfishness but for the steadfast adherence to the great basic principles of truth and justice. Meeting often with trickery and double-dealing in politics among those high in the councils of the party, he never lost faith in the plain people. Since he himself never wavered in the performance of his public duties, but administered public affairs as conscientiously as he pulled corn blades for the Crawford damaged book, he thus more nearly than any other before or since represented the people. It is believed that he is more highly regarded and sincerely appreciated by the people of the South today than is Jefferson Davis, and this, together with the fact that he preserved the unity and continuity of our nation, is the greatest and most enduring monument to his memory. Of all the men aspiring to the Presidency during the campaign of 1860, Lincoln alone could have preserved the unity and continuity of our nation.

“NOW HE BELONGS TO THE AGES”

Broken by it I too may be; bow to it I never will. The probability that we may fail in the struggle ought not deter us from the support of a cause we believe to be just.

An attorney by the name of Breckenridge resided on a farm not far from Boonville, the county seat of Warrick county. This town was about twenty miles from the Lincoln cabin, but the ambitious youth frequently made pilgrimages to this gentleman's home to borrow his law books, sometimes remaining throughout the day and night reveling in the mysteries of the law.

Wesley Hall maintained that young Lincoln also obtained his first opportunity of reading Shakespeare on these visits, and alleged that he had heard Lincoln recite portions of some of the great dramatist's writings.

Members of the Breckenridge family long pointed out a

certain stump in the yard of the home which they had pleased to call "Lincoln's Stump" by reason of the fact that at certain times he was in the habit of perching himself upon this while reading.

Lincoln visited the circuit court sessions both at Rockport and Boonville, and it was at this latter place that he heard John Breckenridge, a member of the famous family by that name in Kentucky.

A murder had been committed, and the defendant had employed the brilliant criminal lawyer. The knowledge that "a big lawyer" from an adjoining state was to be connected with the case reached Gentryville, and a number of men journeyed to Boonville to witness this trial and particularly to hear Breckenridge. Lincoln was, of course, one of this group.

Breckenridge had been greatly favored by nature, and possessing an enviable reputation as a great lawyer he had become more or less vain. Quite in keeping with the custom of the times among certain classes his dress was particularly fastidious, and his raven black hair was made yet more glossy by a copious use of "bear's ile."

The court room was crowded, and Lincoln stood well to the rear throughout the whole of Breckenridge's argument. At the close of this address a short recess was taken, and during this intermission a number of the members of the bar offered congratulations on the masterly effort of the great advocate. Young Lincoln, witnessing these expressions of appreciation and being profoundly moved by the address himself, straightway resolved to offer his congratulations also. Unmindful of the fact that he was not a member of the bar, that he was dressed in his accustomed blouse, and buckskin breeches, with his coarse black hair disheveled and in wild confusion, he pressed forward, offered his hand to the great man and was on the point of expressing his pleasure at hearing the argument, when Breckenridge deliberately turned his back upon the youth, not deigning to notice him.

Years went by, and when Lincoln was in the White House this gentleman, then a resident of the State of Texas, was presented to the President, who readily recalled both the man and the circumstance at Boonville. Lincoln exclaimed as he

grasped the proffered hand: "Oh, yes I know Mr. Breckenridge. I heard you address a jury in a murder trial at Boonville, Indiana, when I was a boy. I remember that I thought at the time it was a great speech, and that if I could make a speech like that I would be very happy."

It will be observed throughout that Lincoln's ambition "to rise in the world" was overmastering. It was said of a great German that he was the "God-intoxicated man." So it might well have been said of young Lincoln that he was intoxicated with a consuming desire to acquire knowledge.

Very naturally one would be led to believe that had such a hungry mind been supplied with books in abundance his advancement would have been rapid. But there is even in this wasted pity and sympathy, judging by some certain things transpiring a little later.

When Lincoln entered upon the practice of his chosen profession—the law—and had more or less leisure for study, he read but few books. Associated as he was with Stuart, Logan and Herndon, and the latter possessing a rather pretentious library, yet Lincoln rarely read these books. It was his custom while out on the circuit to take on these six weeks' journeys school texts, and a great deal of his time was taken up with literature of a lighter character than one would have supposed true in his case. A great deal of his reading was desultory, and he appeared to revel in those publications of a humorous or witty character. Judging by his tastes in this regard, had he been privileged to have access to such publications as *Judge* or *Puck*, he would have been greatly delighted.

It may well be doubted therefore whether any other course than that which he did pursue would have proven any better than the self denial which was imposed upon him, and compelled his complete mastery of the few classics that fell into his possession.

Contrary to the statement of Colonel Lamon and others who alleged that Lincoln did not read the Bible during his youth, it is indisputably true that he read it again and again. Indeed, if there were no other evidence than his public addresses and State papers to verify this, that would be quite

sufficient for the very spirit and sentiment of many of them are traceable to the King James version of the Bible.

But we do not need to rely upon this source altogether for information in the matter, since his associates assert that he was accustomed to read the Bible very much, and such a practice in a youth, which was not at all common then and for that matter is not so today, would well be calculated to occasion comment.

The London *Times*, in speaking of Mr. Lincoln's second Inaugural Address, likened it to the productions of one of the ancient prophets, and spoke of its author as possessing such keen prophetic insight and power as to justify the appellation of a seer.

Lincoln read Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* again and again, and so familiar did he become with it that he could repeat many pages from memory. He particularly admired Aesop's *Fables*, and so often did he read them that he could have said, as did Lord Macaulay of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, that if every copy had been destroyed, he could have reproduced it from memory. Dennis Hanks said that "young Lincoln would lie down on his face in front of the fire, with Aesop's *Fables* before him," and read to his stepmother and the "illiterate Denny," as Abraham called him. When some point in the story appealed to him as being funny or humorous, he would laugh and continue laughing so heartily that both Mrs. Lincoln and Dennis would be compelled to join him, although Hanks asserted that "most of the time he did not know what he was laughing about, although Abe said he did."

The family Bible, *Pilgrim's Progress* and Aesop's *Fables* were the only books in the possession of the family on their arrival in Indiana. The mother of Lincoln was accustomed to read these books to both her daughter Sarah and little Abraham, and it is said that Aesop's *Fables* possessed a peculiar fascination and charm for him while yet a mere lad at his mother's knee.

The *Life of Washington*, which Lincoln obtained from Josiah Crawford in the manner heretofore detailed, was read many times, and if it may be charged that this volume took

occasion to deify Washington and failed to meet with acceptance at a later period, it was perhaps the very best sort of publication for Lincoln and certainly better suited to him at that time than such a biography as that by Washington Irving. The *History of the United States*, as has been stated, was obtained from Jones, the storekeeper, but *Robinson Crusoe*, and *The Life of Benjamin Franklin* we do not know how or when they were obtained, but probably from the library of Crawford.

What marvelous transformation was thus wrought in the life of a single youth, and what potential possibilities are wrapped up in a single soul! Left, as Lincoln was, a motherless lad at the tender age of ten, living for one winter in a half-faced camp with no teachers and no schools worthy of the name, yet strange to say mastering some of the world's best classics, which fate, or chance (that Victor Hugo says is only another name for Providence) had thrown in his way, and with the Indiana wilderness as his *Alma Mater* he matriculated at an early age. His curriculum was history, theology, mathematics, literature and woodcraft. His major was history; his frat house, a half-faced camp, and his college campus, a clearing that he had made with his own hands. He left brush college during his freshman year to devote himself exclusively to athletics, in which he particularly excelled, especially with the ax and maul. After a time he took up the study of law, having found a copy of Blackstone's *Commentaries* in a barrel of plunder which, strange to say, he had purchased from one poorer than himself. He later entered upon the practice of his chosen profession which he followed until he was called to be the chief executive of the nation.

Lincoln's life story surpasses anything in the pages of romance or fiction ever conceived or invented by literary genius! It is passing therefore strange that the boy Lincoln has for the most part been refused those things that in later years were so marked in his character and which were beyond question sufficiently prominent in his youth as to cause his early associates to remember him by them.

An effort has been made in the performance of this self-imposed task to show that substantially every characteristic

trait so universally allowed in Mr. Lincoln as a man was also noted in him as a boy and youth.

It is believed that sufficient data has been offered to substantiate the claim made that before Mr. Lincoln reached the State of Illinois, and therefore while yet a resident of Indiana, he possessed that inimitable style in public address, his well-known sense of fairness, his strange and weird melancholy, his quaint humor and rare wit, his consuming ambition, certain weaknesses, his abiding faith in Providence, his superstitious beliefs, his Calvinistic fatalism which he usually hitched on to a sort of Arminian faith, his freedom from bad habits, his methods in original investigation, his peculiar style in controverted questions, his power with the pen, his honesty and truthfulness, and in fact every characteristic that has been noted in him again and again as a man.

It is also believed that there is sufficient data submitted to justify the claim that not only was the foundation of Mr. Lincoln's character laid in the Indiana wilderness, but the beginning of all that afterwards made him great asserted itself during these early years.

It is of course not asserted that Mr. Lincoln's style, both in public address and in composition, was at all perfected while a mere youth, for he seems to have made steady progress in this to the very last. But it is claimed that there is sufficient evidence to warrant the belief that his peculiar style in debate, his platform mannerisms, his cool, calculating logic and irresistible wit and humor were quite as characteristic of his boyhood efforts as they were later noted and so generally commented upon.

It is recalled that he could set an entire neighborhood laughing and talking about his productions. He impressed himself upon Judge Pitcher and the Baptist minister so as to cause each of them to express keen appreciation of his ability with the pen when his manuscripts on National Politics and Temperance were submitted to them. It would seem to be only a reasonable supposition and not mere conjecture that the man who wrote the second Inaugural Address, the Cooper Institute speech, and the Gettysburg oration in the day of his power and maturity would have manifested some intimation

of this great ability and latent power earlier in life a thing which he seems to have done quite often, but more particularly in the compositions above referred to.

LEAVING THE INDIANA WILDERNESS

The Almighty has his own purposes; * * * Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away.

The Lincolns and Hankses left Indiana in the month of March, 1830. John Hanks, after spending four years in the Indiana home of the Lincolns, returned to Kentucky, and then moved to Illinois in the year 1828. He wrote such glowing accounts of the new country that it caused Dennis Hanks to make a journey to this region with a view of removing there.

The terrible blight of milk-sick which began its ravages in Gentryville in the year 1818 continued for the next ten years. Dennis Hanks lost all of his cattle in consequence of its ravages, and had been seized with the disease himself, but recovered. When Dennis Hanks decided to leave Indiana for Illinois, he influenced his mother-in-law, Mrs. Lincoln, who did not wish to be separated from her daughter. She seems to have been largely responsible for the removal of the Lincolns also, and accordingly both families and that of Levi Hall, another son-in-law of Mrs. Lincoln, began to make preparation for this change during the winter of 1830.

The farm of Thomas Lincoln was disposed of to the elder Gentry, if indeed it was not already his by reason of having loaned the money for its purchase originally. At least, a quantity of corn and a drove of hogs were disposed of to Mr. Gentry, and such other changes were wrought as proved necessary to make this journey to begin life anew. Thomas Lincoln had a "chuck wagon," the woodwork being his own construction, but since it was "ironed off," it was a subject of considerable comment, for such vehicles were exceedingly rare. It was necessary to have suitable teams of oxen, and accordingly there began more or less "swapping and dickering". In the main this was done by Dennis Hanks, John Johnson and Abraham Lincoln. Allen Brooner stated that two of these oxen

were obtained from him, Abraham Lincoln and John Johnson making this trade. There was considerable "haggling" over the trade on the part of Johnson, Lincoln not entering into the matter save in an incidental way. Brooner long afterward, in speaking of this circumstance, said: "If anybody had asked me that day to pick out a President, I'd a quickly made choice of Johnson."

The elder Hall sold the other yoke of cattle to Thomas Lincoln, but these were purchased by proxy, he having sent his son Abraham and Dennis Hanks to do the trading. Wesley Hall delivered the team to Hanks and young Lincoln.

Hall was present on the occasion of the beginning of the journey to Illinois. However, the Lincolns only journeyed that afternoon as far as Gentry's in Gentryville, and remained over night with that gentleman. During the night young Lincoln made a judicious selection of notions, such as needles, pins, thread, knives, forks and spoons, his purchase amounting to just thirty dollars. With this "peddler's outfit" he purposed realizing a profit by disposing of it along the way at the farmhouses. This he seems to have succeeded in doing beyond his expectations, for "he wrote back after his arrival in Illinois stating that he doubled his money".

The people of Gentryville were loath to see the Lincolns leave, and it is said that on the morning of their final departure quite a crowd collected to bid them farewell. Many of them accompanied the Lincolns some distance on their journey, among them being the elder Gentry. One man in telling of seeing them begin their journey stated that "Abe drove the oxen, having a rope attached to the horn of a lead ox, and with a hickory 'gad' in his free hand."

None of the party of thirteen ever returned to the scenes of their fourteen years' residence in Indiana save Abraham, and, as has been stated, he spent three days in and about Gentryville during the political campaign of 1844 making three speeches in that county. He was the guest of the Gentrys most of the time. However, after making the speech at Carter's schoolhouse he accepted the urgent invitation of "Blue Nose" Crawford to accompany him home. He was much the same Lincoln then that his old friends had known fourteen

years before. He quite readily recognized all of his old neighbors, calling them by their given names, and made inquiry as to certain things in which he had been especially interested prior to his leaving there. He expressed a desire on reaching the Crawford home to see the old whip-saw-pit where he had stood as the "under man" on many an occasion whip-sawing lumber.

Sometime after Lincoln had been in the White House, seventeen years having elapsed since seeing his boyhood home and meeting with his old friends, a gentleman from Gentryville visited him in Washington, his purpose in making the journey being merely to gratify his curiosity and pleasure in beholding the greatness of his old boyhood friend. On his arrival at the White House he found quite a number of people in waiting. He sent in his name, and supposed, of course, that the rule here would be something similar to what he and the then present occupant of the White House had been accustomed to in their boyhood in going to Gordon's Mill—first come, first served. But he was greatly surprised a few moments after making his presence known to hear his name called, and on entering the private office of the President he was warmly greeted with the old time cordiality. They had conversed but a short while when Lincoln said to him:

Now, Bill, there's a whole lot of dignitaries out there (pointing) that are waiting to see me about something or other, and I'll tell you what I want you to do. This is your first visit to Washington, and I reckon you'll want to look around at the sights, so you go and do that and then come back here about supper time and after we've had something to eat we'll go off to ourselves, and I jings we'll have a good time talking over old times.

This appealed to his old friend, and accordingly he returned from viewing the sights of the city toward night-fall and found Lincoln waiting for him. After they had dined Lincoln said: "Now come with me", and leading the way they reached a room on the second floor. After entering, the President turned the key, he then pulled off his coat, and seating himself on the small of his back with his feet resting upon the table he began asking numerous questions concerning his old neighbors. The narrator in telling this, said:

Abe asked about everybody from the mouth of Anderson creek to Boonville. He'd say: "Bill, who did Sis so-and-so marry? Where does this one live? Who lives on such-and-such a farm?" By and by, closing his eyes and drawing a long breath, he said: "Bill, how did the Gentry boys vote in the last election?" I hesitated to tell him, for I know'd ever one of 'em voted for Douglass and were agin him. But finally I out with it, and Abe opened his eyes slow like, and looking straight at me for a little bit he sorter sighed.

The statement made by some of the biographers that Allen Gentry voted for his old flat-boat partner, in spite of the fact that he was a Democrat, is incorrect. The writer, in an interview with James Gentry, referred to this Gentryville neighbor's visit to Lincoln, and Mr. Gentry exclaimed with a laugh:

Yes, Bill told me all about it when he got back from seeing Abe, and he said Abe 'peared to ask about everybody from Anderson clean down to Boonville, but he left us boys to the last. Never even mentioned our names till he asked how we all voted, and when Bill told him we all went agin him, by gum, it mighty nigh broke old Abe's heart. Course, fellows like us goin' agin him would hurt, I reckon, but them was purty stormy times, and we know'd it would take a smart man to run things, and we'd all grow'd up with Abe and while we liked him, and we know'd that Abe could hold his own in a tussle, we didn't think he was big enough to wrastle with such questions that was up then. Besides, by gum, we was all Democrats and believed Judge Douglass could take matters in hand.

When it was suggested that Lincoln managed to keep house pretty well after all, Gentry laughed heartily and said:

O, Abe always tracked the Constitution, and as long as he done that he had 'em. Then he followed Henry Clay in lots of things such as his African Colonization scheme and gradual emancipation and the like, and you know old Henry was purty tolerable hard to head off. So Abe just stood there between all of them fellers and made 'em take their medicine. Abe come out all right in the end, but if he hadn't a stood by the Constitution, and if he'd got off on something else like a whole lot of the rest of 'em did, he'd a never a made it. It was stickin' to the Constitution that done it.

When Wesley Hall was asked as to whether he at any time during his youth was inclined to the belief that Lincoln would some day become famous, he straightway replied:

Abe would have been one of the last ones of our crowd that I'd a ever dreamed about becoming President. I would have picked out one or two

of the boys that was a heap more likely than him. Not but what Abe was smart and all that, but he was so tall, lean, lank and ugly, and went lumbering around so and was always a jokin' and cuttin' up, and I couldn't see anything in him then that looked like my notion of what a President ort to be.

When it was suggested to Hall, by way of provoking further comment, that Lincoln certainly was one of our great men, he exclaimed:

Yes, he is and the greatest too, but what made him so great? I'll tell you, it wusn't because he was educated, for he had no chance down here them days, but Abe just acted up there at Washington like he would anywheres else, and whenever anything comes up he just done what wuz right, that's all. It was nothing but Abe's honesty that made him great, and when you come to think about it that oughn't to be so strange. That's what all of us boys was taught them days, and I think I've been honest myself all of my life, just as honest as Abe ever was fer that matter.

When it was further suggested that Lincoln managed things pretty well and overcame great obstacles, Hall observed:

Yes, that's so, but after all when all is said and done, it always comes back to what I say. Abe always just done what was right about everything, that's all. If somebody else'd been in his place that'd a been as honest as he was and a allus done about what's right, everything'd a come out all right.

The simplicity of Lincoln's life, his democratic spirit, his approachableness, living the life of a commoner while the executive head of the nation, are quite in keeping with his oft expressed partiality for and faith in the common people. He was the very embodiment of the homlier virtues of truth, sincerity and honesty. The temptations ordinarily would have been strong upon one like Lincoln in the heyday of his power either to attempt to conceal his humble beginnings, his poverty and lack of schooling, or on the other hand to have referred boastfully to them. Not the least mark of his greatness is the fact that he did neither. What modesty forbad in this, as in other things, his honesty and good sense approved, so that the democracy of manhood in him shines like a beacon light, dimming the glare of burnished and furbished greatness in the many so-called great men.

General Andrew Jackson has ever been popularly regarded as one possessing that democracy of spirit scarcely equalled by any other chief executive of our nation. It may be altogether fitting in this connection to relate an incident having to do with this element in "Old Hickory". An old Shenandoah Valley neighbor of the writer often related the following circumstance concerning Jackson, and since it seems good enough to be true, and judging by the character and standing of the old neighbor, it is believed to be true.

Some twenty-five teamsters were hauling iron ore to Georgetown from a point in Virginia, each man driving a four-horse team. It was while Jackson was President that on one occasion, after the wagons and teams had been disposed of in the big wagon yards at Georgetown, an uncle of the informant, Baker by name, proposed to the crowd that they go over to the White House and pay their respects to "Old Hickory". Practically all of the men opposed the proposition, since they were in their work-a-day garb, and it was suggested by some that on their next trip they come prepared for this visit to the White House by each bringing along suitable apparel. But Baker was insistent, and so much so that one man, to some extent spokesman for all the rest, said, addressing Baker: "If you'll do all the talking, we'll go." Whereupon Baker replied: "Certainly, I'll do that provided all of you will do what I ask you to do." When it was asked as to what was expected of them, Baker drew his black-snake whip about his neck and tying the free end of the lash into a bow with the stock hanging down in front, not unlike a yoke, said: "Now, men, all of you do as I have and then fall in line by twos and follow me." This was done, and the twenty-five Virginians marched up to the White House, with Baker leading them. When the door opened in response to their ring, an old-time colored man stood looking out upon this strange sight, manifesting surprise, and then bowing quite low he asked what was wanted. Baker, true to his promise, acted as spokesman and straightway requested that the party be taken in and given an audience with the President. The door closed behind the old colored man, and ere long it was opened again, and with another low bow the old fellow announced: "Gemmen, de President's busy and can't

see you." But Baker was not to be disposed of so easily, for now quickly stepping up near the old man and lifting his voice, cried out: "We came to see the President, and we are going to do so before we go away." Just then a voice within, with a sort of military ring in it, was heard asking: "What's the matter out front? What does that crowd of men want?" Presently the door was thrown wide open, sending the old servant with it, and Jackson stood facing Baker and his twenty-four neighbors. The President, without any word of greeting or salutation, immediately asked: "What's wanted, men?" Baker, having uncovered and each man doing so in like manner, replied: "Mr. President, we are Virginians and your friends, and we have no business with you at all save that we just wished to call and see you, that's all." Jackson's brow, which at first was knitted into a frown, at once cleared, and turning about face he said to Baker and his men: "Follow me." Baker leading the way and the men following by twos, each one with his hat under his arm, filed into a "big room on the right." As they entered it was observed that quite a number of well-dressed gentlemen were in the room, and seeing the Virginians following Jackson they all arose and quickly stepped back near the wall with a look of astonishment and wonder upon each face. Jackson did not stop until a small table was reached on the opposite side of the room from the door of entrance, and going behind this and resting his hand upon it with a sort of lurking twinkle in either eye, he said, addressing Baker who now stood immediately in front of him: "You say that you are Virginians and wish to see me. Is there anything I can do for you?" to which Baker replied:

No, sir, Mr. President, we have not come to ask any favor of you, as I said. These men with me are my neighbors. We are all Virginians and your friends and supporters. We are teamsters and haul iron ore to Georgetown, and I proposed that we come over and call on you. Some of the men did not want to come dressed as we are, and I told them we'd go just as you see us."

While Baker was making this explanation it was observed that a peculiar look came over the President's features as if he were especially pleased, and then he said: "You say

you just wished to see the President, and now that you have seen 'Old Hickory' what do you think of him?"

Baker, apparently being equal to just such an emergency as this, quickly observed: "Mr. President, we think he does pretty well for a 'shell bark'." Some of the men composing the party afterward confessed grave fears as to just how this familiarity of their spokesman would be received, but all suspense was quickly relieved by Jackson giving himself up to unrestrained laughter. Straightening up to his full stature, with his features set hard, and looking toward the gentlemen standing about the wall, he said:

Gentlemen, you are all Englishmen and accustomed as you are to certain things, you no doubt gaze with wonder and perhaps surprise upon a scene like this. You very naturally ask what is the secret of our greatness as a nation and how we are going to maintain our liberties. I'll answer you by saying that we have had two wars with your nation, although now we are happily at peace. I had something to do in both of these wars, and I whipped your army at New Orleans with an army composed of men just like these Virginians here, and as long as men in their work-a-day clothes think they have a right to come to the nation's Capitol and call on their ruler, so long will our liberties be safe.

Following these remarks Jackson stepped quickly among the Virginians and taking each by the hand gave words of greeting. General Jackson was quite democratic, hating kings and monarchies, but at the same time possessing more or less of the imperialistic spirit, while Lincoln possessed all of the democracy of Jackson and none of the other spirit.

DEATH AND BURIAL OF NANCY HANKS LINCOLN

"All that I am or ever hope to be I owe to my angel of a mother."

"I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine that would attempt to beguile you from a grief of a loss so overwhelming."

In the year 1818 Abraham Lincoln experienced a great misfortune in the death of his mother. The many exacting duties incident to pioneer life doubtless constituted a factor in producing that strange melancholy that ever possessed him, but to be bereft of his mother at the age of ten was perhaps

in the main responsible for this. At least it justifies the belief that such a sad misfortune at this period of his life, together with some of the attending circumstances, readily took advantage of a latent predisposition so characteristic of his mother.

Comparatively little is known concerning Nancy Hanks and there is small wonder, since nothing eventful transpired in her life beyond those things common to the pioneer. Allusion has already been made to the early belief of her neighbors and her more immediate relatives as to her obscure origin. She certainly did not attempt to correct this belief, and doubtless was possessed with the same idea as were others. That there has been a more or less labored effort on the part of certain biographers of Mr. Lincoln to account for his exceptional ability by professing a marked partiality for his maternal ancestry is known to all.

Dennis Hanks, as reported by Elinor Adkinson in *The Boy Lincoln*, said :

We wus all pore them days, but the Lincolns was poorer than anybody. Choppin' trees an' grubbin' roots an' trappin' didn't leave Tom no time. It wus all he could do to git his family enough to eat an' to kiver 'em. Nancy was terribly ashamed of the way they lived, but she knowed Tom wus doin' his best an' she wusn't the pesterin' kind. She wus purty as a pictur an' smart as you'd find 'em anywhere. She could read and write. The Hankses wus some smarter 'n the Lincolns. Tom thought a heap of Nancy, an' he wus as good to her as he knowd how. He didn't drink or swear or play cyards or fight; an' them wus drinkin,' cussin', quarrelsome days. Tom wus popyler an' he could lick a bully if he had to. He jest couldn't get a head some how.

Mr. Herndon, the friend and law partner of Mr. Lincoln, and later his biographer, in speaking of Lincoln's mother, said:

At the time of her marriage to Thomas Lincoln, Nancy was in her twenty-third year. She was above the ordinary height in stature, weighed about one hundred and thirty pounds; was slenderly built and had much the appearance of one inclined to consumption. Her skin was dark; her hair dark brown, eyes grey and small; forehead prominent, face sharp and angular with an expression of melancholy which fixed itself in the memory of anyone who ever saw or knew her. Though her life was seemingly clouded by a spirit of sadness, she was in disposition amiable and generally cheerful. Mr. Lincoln said to me in 1851, on receiving the

news of his father's death, that whatever might be said of his parents and however unpromising the early surroundings of his mother may have been, she was highly intellectual by nature and had a strong memory, acute judgment, and was cool and heroic. From a mental standpoint she no doubt rose above her surroundings, and had she lived, the stimulus of her nature would have accelerated her son's success. She would have been a much more ambitious prompter than his father ever was.

That Mr. Lincoln possessed the melancholy self-control, cool and calculating judgment and natural goodness of his mother is apparent, and even marks of facial resemblance are conceded. Some certain and important traits of character are also traceable to the father, and taking it all in all these latter qualities are quite as important as were the others. That faculty and habit of story telling so natural to the President, his peculiar and quaint method of relating them and their apparently inexhaustible supply were characteristic of not only his father, but true of his uncles, Mordecai and Josiah, as well as of many of his Lincoln cousins.

Without suggesting any lack in the family of his mother of that greatest of all traits which he possessed—that of honesty—and for which he is so justly famed, it must be said in all fairness that whatever by nature, example and precept he received from the mother that caused a nation to call her son "Honest Abe", certainly honesty was a dominant trait of the father and the one characteristic that stands out so prominently in the life of practically every Lincoln. Dennis Hanks confessed that Lincoln was indebted to his father for his uncompromising honesty rather than to the Hankses.

Judging by the data in hand, therefore, it may be said that the Lincolns were the equal of the Hankses in social standing and ancestry, and in fact there is discerned a favorable comparison in substantially all other things ordinarily considered in such matters.

It should particularly be said that the meagerness of knowledge concerning Nancy Hanks, and more especially her early death, furnished a large field for conjecture and the freest possible play of the imagination. Since Thomas Lincoln lived until the year 1851, having ever remained a simple-minded, illiterate pioneer, never at any time distinguishing

himself, it became the fashion to speak lightly and even disparagingly of him as compared to his wife, Nancy Hanks, who dying while quite young, became a subject for adulation and eulogy, and whatever was deemed wanting in the father and husband was readily supposed to have been possessed by the mother and wife.

That Nancy Hanks was somewhat exceptional and in every way worthy of such an illustrious son appears to be abundantly evident in spite of the meagerness of data at hand. That she must have wielded a strong influence upon him is equally true, and perhaps even greater than we can possibly know. Yet, in all fairness it must be said that Mr. Lincoln seldom mentioned his mother in later life, but again and again paid great tribute to his stepmother and it was the stepmother, not Nancy Hanks, of who he spoke when he used the oft-quoted lines (usually misquoted): "Al that I am and ever hope to be I owe to my angel of a mother."

Any attempt to account for the remarkable career of Abraham Lincoln must give a large place to the plans and purposes of the Almighty. The Jewish nation spent four centuries in a strange land before it produced its great prophet, military leader and law-giver, Moses. We do not ordinarily attempt to account for the career of Moses by emphasizing his lineage and learning so much as we do the fact that God was with him from the time he was placed in the little pitch basket among the bulrushes of the Nile until the day when he climbed the mount to die.

Bishop Charles Fowler, in his lecture on "Abraham Lincoln", related the following incident in the life of the President which transpired when Lincoln was twenty-eight years of age. A short distance from Springfield, Illinois, an old-fashioned camp-meeting was in progress in a grove. A party of seven men, composed of physicians, lawyers and ministers, had decided to attend these services one night.

On this particular occasion Lincoln was in a hilarious mood, joking with the lawyers, preachers and doctors in succession, and even thrusting humorous remarks upon the horses drawing the vehicle in which they were riding. He

kept every one laughing by his stories and "yarns", until the grove was reached.

That evening a pioneer minister preached a sermon of unusual power, occasioning considerable religious excitement. While the discourse throughout was stirring and thoughtful, the peroration was particularly so. In this he referred to Moses leading the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage, and laid stress upon the fact that God had called him for such a purpose in the fulness of time. Then, as was frequently the case in pulpits of that day, he pronounced a curse upon African slavery in America, prophesying that "the Almighty would raise up a leader to smite this curse." As he closed his remarks he lifted his hands beseechingly, and in a burst of prophetic fervor exclaimed: "Who knows but that the man destined to liberate the slaves in our land is here tonight."

On the return journey of the group, for whom Lincoln had furnished so much amusement and fun, he was strangely silent, so much so as to speak only occasionally when addressed by some member of the party. This silence was noted by all, and elicited more or less comment on the following day. Sometime during the day after the journey taken, one member of the camp-meeting visitors had occasion to call on Lincoln, and found him still gloomy and depressed. Thinking to rally him by some reference to the occurrences of the evening before, he proceeded to do so, and thereupon Lincoln remarked as follows:

You remember, of course, what the preacher said about slavery and in his peroration that "God would raise up a man to smite slavery", and closed by saying: "Who knows but that he is here tonight." Well, you and others may think me foolish, but I had the conviction then and still have it that I am that man.

At the time of the death of Lincoln's mother there was mourning in practically every home of the entire neighborhood, for that dread disease peculiar to the pioneer days, known as milk-sick, had appeared in epidemic form and attacked beasts as well as men. Thomas and Betsy Sparrow, who had in part reared Nancy Hanks, and who had followed the Lincolns to Indiana, living in the abandoned half faced camp, were both stricken with this scourge and died

about the same time Mrs. Lincoln did. In fact, of the twenty-five families in this settlement, many of whom were former Kentucky neighbors of the Lincolns, more than half were claimed by this strange malady.

Medical assistance was not to be had nearer than thirty miles; and even had there been sufficient attention, it is altogether doubtful whether the ravages of this destroyer of the pioneers could have been arrested.

One may form some idea of the extent to which the pioneers were governed by stern necessity when it is recalled that Thomas Lincoln, the husband, on the death of his wife was forced to perform a part of the offices of an undertaker. There being no one save himself in that community sufficiently skilled with tools to construct a coffin, he did this, and at the same time made coffins in which to bury Thomas and Betsy Sparrow. He was not a stranger to this kind of work, since he was in the habit of doing it for the entire community. The lumber with which the coffin for Nancy Hanks Lincoln was made was whipsawed out of a log unused in the building of the wilderness cabin. Dennis Hanks and Thomas Lincoln sawed the planks, and while they were thus engaged, Abraham whittled out the wooden pins which the elder Lincoln used to fasten the planks together, there being no nails in this part of the world at that time.

The writer knew two persons who were present at the funeral of Nancy Hanks Lincoln. Her burial, which took place a few hundred yards to the south of the cabin home, was denied even the usual committal services, there being no officiating minister present. Indeed, at this time there was no church or minister nearer than thirty miles.

The writer on one occasion had pointed out to him the spot near the foot of the grave where little Abraham stood weeping while the rude casket was being lowered. The Reverend Allen Brooner, then a mere lad, was present on this occasion. He lost his own mother a few days after the burial of Mrs. Lincoln and she was buried by the side of Lincoln's mother; consequently the circumstances became indelibly fixed in his memory. No stone marked these graves for years, and when it was proposed to erect a small monument to the

memory of Nancy Hanks Lincoln, there was some difference of opinion as to which of the two graves was hers, but the statement of Brooner was final.

Although Abraham was but ten years of age at this time, yet impressed with the fact that his mother's memory was entitled to the usual funeral services that he had been accustomed to witness, he wrote a letter requesting the services of Parson Elkins, an itinerant Baptist minister who resided in Kentucky, and who had visited the home of the Lincolns in that State, frequently conducting services there and doubtless officiated at the burial of his baby brother. At any rate, Elkins had impressed himself upon the mind and heart of the lad so that he did not hesitate to presume upon his good offices by asking that he travel a hundred miles through this wilderness.

The boy's confidence in thus presuming upon the willingness of the pioneer preacher to come to him in his need was not misplaced, for although he made this journey and preached the funeral discourse at the grave side without remuneration, yet, like Mary in breaking the alabaster box of precious ointment, Parson Elkins' offices on this occasion have enshrined his memory in the hearts of Christendom and his name by this one deed alone has been redeemed from that oblivion to which it would have otherwise been consigned.

One may stand at the grave side of the mother of Lincoln today, look through the woods to the north and see the little knoll on which then stood the cabin where now looms up with comparatively large dimensions a high school building immediately in front of the cabin site—an institution that would have been regarded by Lincoln in his youth as Heaven sent.

Marked changes have been wrought since that mournful pioneer funeral procession took its sad way down the slope and through the wood to the elevated spot where his mother sleeps. In making this little journey now one crosses the steam railroad track, passes beneath the telephone and telegraph wires, and walks by the mouth of a coal mine—all telling of another civilization and another age, for they all came after Lincoln's removal to Illinois.

It is claimed, and not without sufficient grounds, that the place where the future President spent his youth and reached his majority, and where he formed and matured his character, possessing as he did while yet a youth substantially all of those eminent traits that we are accustomed to note in him as a man, that place where his mother now sleeps and where his only sister lies buried, is of the greatest possible interest, and in view of such world-wide admiration of Lincoln it is deserving of suitable recognition by our general government.

The State of Indiana some years since, aided by individuals, erected a modest monument to the memory of Nancy Hanks Lincoln, the mother of the President, and made purchase of the grounds adjoining her burial place which now constitute what is known as Lincoln park.

As commendable as was this belated tribute, unfortunately the site of the cabin home of Lincoln was not included in this purchase and this place yet remains in the hands of private individuals. Should there come a time (and it will) when this spot shall have been appropriately honored beyond that hitherto attempted, and some President of the United States in official capacity shall journey thither and deliver an address, if perchance in the course of his remarks he should give utterance to some such sentiment as the following, he would only be speaking true to history:

Here on this spot in the year 1816 Thomas Lincoln erected a log cabin in which was reared his son Abraham, our first typical American, who in temperamental make up, in certain marked characteristics, in the simplicity of his life and character, was the embodiment of those traits of honesty and truthfulness which pre-eminently characterized the pioneer Hoosier citizen. Three States of our Union had to do in shaping his destiny and fashioning his great career. Kentucky gave him birth, in the day of his power Illinois offered him to the country in the hour of the Nation's crisis; but it was here in Indiana that these enduring traits of character found their setting, without which he would have failed in his gigantic task, and, possessing them as he did, they later fashioned him into a mighty leader destined under God to give this nation a new birth of freedom, that "the government of the people for the people and by the people might not perish from the earth."

In a year after the death of Mrs. Lincoln, Thomas Lincoln made a visit to his old home in Kentucky, leaving Dennis

Hanks, Abraham and his sister Sarah in the wilderness. The motive in making this visit became apparent to those remaining behind when on his return he brought with him a bride and her three children, Matilda, Sarah and John D. Johnson, children by a former marriage. The second Mrs. Lincoln, who was destined to wield a remarkable influence over the future President, was a woman somewhat above the average pioneer. Her coming to this destitute home was timely, since Abraham had now reached that age when he stood in need of just such encouragement and sympathy as she was eminently capable of giving and which she freely bestowed upon him.

In an interview with Mr. Herndon she said, in speaking of this period and of Abraham in particular:

I induced my husband to permit Abe to read and study at home as well as at school. At first he was not easily reconciled to it, but finally he seemed willing to encourage him to a certain extent. Abe was a dutiful son to me always. We took particular care when he was reading not to disturb him, and we let him read on and on until he quit of his own accord.

Notwithstanding the fact that Mrs. Lincoln had been left a widow, and at the time of her marriage to Thomas Lincoln was living "on an alley of the town in a log cabin," she was highly regarded by her neighbors and possessed a pride and bearing quite beyond that which her condition would ordinarily appear to warrant. The proud spirit that characterized her then was never broken by any of the vicissitudes of her later years. She was quite superior in many ways to her husband. Her gifts and graces were so pronounced as to call forth in later years splendid tributes of praise from both her own children and her step son. The changes wrought in the wilderness cabin home soon after her coming occasioned neighborhood comment, and made such an impression upon Dennis Hanks, an inmate of the home and later her son-in-law, as to cause that gentleman to pay her grateful praise.

Aside from the refinement and culture which she possessed, tending to inspire her household to emulate her, she caused her husband to make certain needful changes in the cabin by hanging a door, laying a floor and cutting a win-

dow. She brought with her certain household effects, such as beds, bedding, bureau, many cooking utensils, knives and forks—in all a four horse wagon load, so that there is small wonder the cheerless cabin took on new life and caused Abraham in later life, when recalling these scenes, to say: “She made me feel like I was human.”

It is claimed that at this time young Abraham was a good boy, affectionate, loving his parents well and obedient to their every wish. Although anything but impudent or rude, he was sometimes uncomfortably inquisitive when strangers would ride along or pass by his father’s fence, and he always, either through boyish pride or to tease his father, would be sure to ask the first question. For this his father would sometimes knock him over, but when thus punished he never “bellowed, but would drop a kind of silent unwelcome tear as evidence of his sensitiveness or other feelings.”

So inquisitive and eager for news was he that on one occasion when a stranger rode up to the Lincoln home to make inquiries as to the road Abraham straightway asked: “What’s the news, stranger?” Before any reply could be made the father, who was attempting to give proper directions of the way, turned and rebuked his son for his interruption. In a moment or two young Abraham again asked: “Stranger, what’s the news where you come from?” This time the indignant father, desiring to silence the inquisitive son, quickly swung his arm, struck the boy full in the mouth with the back of the hand, knocking him down. Young Lincoln, on regaining his feet and perching himself at a safe distance on the fence, as the stranger was drawing rein preparatory to ride on his way, once more eagerly asked: “I say, stranger, what is the news?”

During his Indiana residence up to the time of his mother’s death, Abraham Lincoln had not been privileged to attend school. Soon after the coming of his step mother to the home he was sent to school, his first teacher being Mr. Dorsey who “kept school” not far from the Little Pigeon church. In all he attended three different sessions or terms during his Indiana residence, one at ten years of age, another at fourteen and a very brief term during his seventeenth

year. The entire time thus spent in the school room was less than one year during his life, and he was indebted to his step mother for the privilege of attending school at all after reaching an age when such an opportunity might reasonably promise profit. Such privilege was accompanied by a keen appreciation and gratitude that enabled him richly to repay her in later years for her kindness and partiality. The debt that mankind owes this elect lady can never now be paid save in grateful remembrance of her timely foresight, and thankfulness for wisdom and direction perhaps not altogether of Earth. From the first Lincoln and his step-mother became great friends. In her old age she expressed a decided partiality for him, even indicating a love beyond that for her own son.

Lincoln's great stature and lumbering gait were a subject of neighborhood comment, and Mrs. Lincoln and his father often joked him concerning them also. The elder Lincoln was in the habit of remarking that "Abe looked like he had been chopped out with an ax and needed the jack plane to smooth him down." Mrs. Lincoln said to him on one occasion when she saw him "bump" his head as he came through the cabin door: "Abe, I don't care much about the mud you carry in on the floor, for that can be scrubbed, but you must be careful with my whitewashed ceiling and not damage it." The next day young Lincoln hunted up a crowd of youngsters, and after causing them to wade through a pond of muddy water, he marched them to the Lincoln cabin, picked them up one by one and made them walk across the ceiling with their muddy feet. When Mrs. Lincoln came home and noted the condition of the ceiling she laughed right heartily. Abraham then walked a long distance after lime, prepared whitewash, and once more made the cabin ceiling immaculate.